

THE DIRECTOR OF  
CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE

National Intelligence Council

31 May 1984

NOTE FOR:

OSWR/STD

FROM:

Herbert E. Meyer  
Vice Chairman, NIC

FYI.

*Hem*

Herbert E. Meyer

Att: "'Umbrella Tip' Poison Used  
to Kill Tumours," THE DAILY  
TELEGRAPH, 10 May 84

STAT

# 'UMBRELLA TIP' POISON USED TO KILL TUMOURS

By DAVID FLETCHER *Health Services Correspondent*

THE deadly poison used in the "umbrella killing" of Georgi Markov, the Bulgarian exile in Britain six years ago, is being used by doctors at St Bartholomew's Hospital in the fight against cancer.

An unknown assassin used the tip of his umbrella to inject the poison, Ricin, into the leg of Markov, a writer and broadcaster, as he waited for a London bus. He died four days later.

Ricin, an extract from the castor bean, is one of the most powerful poisons known.

Yet, Dr Philip Thorpe, of the Imperial Cancer Research Fund, explained, it could be targeted so that it killed tumour cells while leaving normal cells unharmed.

## **Trials under way**

His work, and that of Prof. Walter Ross, of the Institute of Cancer Research, is regarded by the Imperial Cancer fund as so promising that clinical trials are now starting at St Bartholomew's.

Dr Thorpe said that bone marrow from patients with a particularly aggressive form of cancer would be removed so that they could be given a powerful combination of radiation and anti-cancer drugs.

Before the marrow was replaced any tumour cells it contained would be destroyed using special antibodies armed with Ricin. The long-term hope is that Ricin could be injected into patients to destroy tumour cells that spread from lung, breast and other common cancers.

Dr Thorpe said: "The linkage of Ricin with antibodies produces the most powerful and specific agents for killing cancer cells."

"These materials, we hope, kill cancer cells in patients without harming their natural tissues."

## **£2.4 million appeal**

His announcement coincided with the launch by St Bartholomew's of a £2,750,000 appeal for funds to improve the hospital's facilities.

A total of £2.4 million is to be spent on restoration of the hospital's 18th Century, grade I listed buildings, because the quality of services to patients is threatened by the poor state of the buildings.

A further £750,000 is to be spent on improving facilities for children's cancer treatment, including the provision of special isolation accommodation to enable highly radioactive treatment to be given to cancer victims.